

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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R 171614Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2481

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 4688

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SV, NO

SUBJ: UPDATE OF SVALBARD DEVELOPMENTS

REFS: (A) OSLO 3828, (B) OSLO3519, (C) OSLO 2946

SUMMARY: RECENT SVALBARD DEVELOPMENTS ARE HIGHLIGHTED BY FIRM POSITION SOVIETS HAVE EXPRESSED ON BARENTS SEA BOUNDARY TALKS, INCREASE IN NORWAY'S ACTIONS TO ASSERT AUTHORITY, RISE OF SOVIET PROTESTS OVER THESE AND OTHER ACTIONS, UPGRADING OF SOVIET HELICOPTER FLEET, AND NEAR COMPLETION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION OFR SVALBARD AFFAIRS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF MET BRIEFLY WITH MPA POLAR ADVISOR BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN SEPT 13 BEFORE LATTER LEFT FOR SVALBARD. BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN WAS MAKING BRIEF TRIP TO CATCH UP ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND CONSULT WITH SVALBARD GOVERNOR ELDRING. HE ALSO PLANS TO MAKE HIS FIRST VISIT TO SOVIET COMMUNITY OF BARENTSBERG.

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FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND, WHO WAS PLANNING TO GO TO SVALBARD

NOW, CANCELLED HIS TRIP TO MEET WITH VISITING FINNISH PRESSIDENT
KEKKONEN AND PARTY (OSLO 3828).

2. DURING CONVERSATION BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN SAID, IN HIS
VIEW, MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN NORWAY' NORTHERN RELATIONS
IN PAST SIX MONTHS WAS SOVIET RESPONSE TO NORWAY'S PROTEST
ABOUT SOVIET MISSILE FIRING INTO DISPUTED BOUNDARY AREA IN
BARENTS SEA. WHEN BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN, THEN CHARGE AT NORWEGIAN
EMBASSY MOSCOW, MADE PROTEST DEMARCHE IN JULY SOVIET MFA
OFFICIAL BRUSHED OFF PROTEST SAYING SOVIET MISSILES HAD BEEN
FIRED INTO SOVIET TERRITORY. IN SOVIET VIEW THERE WAS NO DISPUTED
AREA.

3. BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN SAID IT IS CLEAR SOVIET POSITION CASTS
SHADOW OVER CONTINUATION OF BARENTS SEA CONTINENTAL SHELF
BOUNDARY NEGOTIATIONS AND RAISES DOUBTS ABOUT WHAT LAW OF SEA
MINISTER EVENSEN CAN ACCOMPLISH IN TALKS WITH SOVIETS IN MID-
OCTOBER ABOUT ESTABLISHING AGREED FISHING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE
DISPUTED AREA. EVENSEN HAS BEEN DISCUSSING POSSIBILITY OF
CREATING A "GREY ZONE" IN DISPUTED AREA WHERE SPECIAL AGREED
FISHERY PROVISIONS WOULD BE ESTABLISHED WHILE BOUNDARY NEGOTIATIONS
CONTINUE. BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN SAID IT IS LIKELY THAT THE APPROACH
TO THE BOUNDARY QUESTION WILL BE ONE OF KEY ISSUES EXPLORED WITH
SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO WHEN HE VISITS NORWAY THIS FALL.

4. ON SVALBARD DEVELOPMENTS HE SAID THAT STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN
TO STRENGTHEN SVALBARD GOVERNOR'S STAFF, THOUGH LIMITED HOUSING
ON SVALBARD CURBS MORE RAPID EXPANSION. NORWEGIANS HAVE FOUND
THE GOVERNOR'S NEW HELICOPTER ON SVALBARD VALUABLE AND IT HAS
SEEN MUCH SERVICE. THE GOVERNOR HAS BEEN MAKING WEEKLY VISITS
TO SOVIET COMMUNITY AT BARENTSBERG. THE SOVIETS HAVE NOW
PROTESTED IN OSLO TO THIS PRACTICE, ESPECIALLY RECENTLY WHEN
GOVERNOR BROUGHT TWO UNIFORMED POLICEMEN WITH HIM TO INSPECT
THE SOVIET TOWN. IT IS NOW APPARENT THAT NORWEGIANS NEED AT
LEAST ONE ADDITIONAL HELICOPTER TO CARRY OUT SURVEILLANCE WORK
NECESSARY, AND THIS WILL BE DISCUSSED IN GOVERNMENT LATER.

5. MEANWHILE THE SOVIETS HAVE ADDED TWO NEW HELICOPTERS
CAPABLE OF CARRYING 12 PEOPLE EACH, GIVING THEM A FLEET OF FIVE
OR SEVEN, DEPENDING ON WHETHER TWO HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM ISLAND.
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NORWEGIANS STILL DO NOT HAVE CONTROL OVER ARRIVAL OF SOVIET
AIRCRAFT OR THEIR USE OF SVALBARD AIRSPACE. SOVIETS REPORT
THEIR AIR MOVEMENTS ONLY WHEN THEY PLAN TO USE LONGYEARBYEN
AIRPORT.

6. SOVIETS CONTINUE TO PROTEST NORWEGIAN USE OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT
ON SVALBARD (OSLO 3828), VOICING DISAPPROVAL OF PRIME MINISTER
NORDLI'S USE OF A MILITARY HERCULES PLANE AND OF JUSTICE MINISTER

VALLE'S EMPLOYING AN ORIN AIRCRAFT DURING HER SUMMER VISIT. SOVIETS HAVE NOT AS YET SAID ANYTHING ABOUT RECENT ANNUAL CALL IN LONGYEARBYEN AND NY ALESUND OF TWO NORWEGIAN MILITARY SHIPS. IF THEY DO, SAID BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN, FRYDENLUND WILL INFORM THEM AGAIN THAT NORWEGIANS HAVE THE RIGHT AND INTENTION TO CONTINUE SUCH VISITS.

7. IN OSLO THE COMMITTEE, HEADED BY FORMER ENVIRONMENT MINISTER OLAV GJARVOLD AND INCLUDING FORMER SVALBARD GOVERNOR ODD BIRKETVEDT AND JUSTICE MINISTER DIRECTOR GENERAL JAN SKAARE, TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION MACNINERY FOR SVALBARD HAS COMPLETED ITS HEARINGS WITH INVOLVED AGENCIES (OSLO 2946). ITS REPORT SHOULD BE FORTHCOMING LATER IN FALL. COMMITTEE SEEMS TO BE POINTING TOWARD RECOMMENDING ESTABLISHMENT OF SVALBARD BUREAU IN JUSTICE MINISTRY, EQUIVALENT TO US DEPARTMENTAL BUREAU, NEADED BY A DIRECTOR GENERAL AND CONSISTING OF TWO OFFICE DIVISIONS. BECAUSE OF ITS STRONG INVOLVEMENT IN SVALBARD MATTERS, FOREIGN OFFICE IS CONCERNED ABOUT (1) HOW IT WILL RELATE TO THE NEW AND STRENGTHENED JUSTICE MINISTRY BUREAU WHEN IT IS ESTABLISHED AND (2) WHO WILL HEAD IT. IT NOW SEEMS THAT BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN IS ONE (AND A GOOD ONE) OF POSSIBLE CANDIDATES TO HEAD THE BUREAU. ANDERS

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